

debt in just 10 years. Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget, and the debt tax, D-E-B-T, is one tax that cannot be repealed.

The current national debt: \$8,369,917,837,082 and some change. Each individual's share of the national debt, including every man, woman, and child alive tonight, is somewhere around \$28,000. Well, the average household income in my district is not much more than that, Mr. Speaker. Yet it would take that amount of money from every living man, woman, and child in this country to wipe out this national debt.

It is time for this Republican Congress to stop this reckless spending. It is time for this Republican Congress to address our Nation and its spending habits with a good dose of common sense.

Now, why do deficits matter? Deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities. We spend today, and it is our children and grandchildren that get stuck with the bills. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders, who now own about 40 percent of our debt. That is right, this President and this Republican Congress has borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors in the past 5½ years than the previous 42 presidents combined.

The U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of about \$2 trillion of our Nation's public debt. Compare this to only \$23 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993.

So who do we owe all this money to? The top ten current lenders are: Japan. We have borrowed, our Nation has borrowed, this Republican Congress and this Republican administration has borrowed \$640.1 billion from Japan. China, \$321.4 billion.

As my friend John Tanner has pointed out, if China decides to invade Taiwan, we will have to borrow more money from China to defend Taiwan. This is a dangerous path that we are going down as a Nation, owing all this money to foreign central banks and foreign investors.

The United Kingdom. We have borrowed, our Nation has borrowed \$179.5 billion from the United Kingdom. OPEC. And we wonder why gasoline is approaching three bucks a gallon. Our Nation has borrowed \$98 billion from OPEC. Korea, \$72.4 billion. Taiwan, \$68.9 billion. The Caribbean banking centers, \$61.7 billion. Hong Kong, \$46.6 billion. Germany, \$46.5 billion.

And Mexico. Imagine that, our Nation has borrowed \$40.1 billion from Mexico. To do what? To finance the war in Iraq, to finance tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year. And the list goes on and on.

□ 2340

Again, our national debt is \$8,369,917,837,082 and some change, and this is just a small sampling of where

\$2 trillion of that debt has come from. It has come from foreign central banks and foreign investors.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any questions or comments or concerns about what I am talking about tonight as it relates to the debt and the deficit and trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government, I invite you to e-mail us at BlueDog@mail.house.gov. Again, there are 37 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. Our mission is to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions or concerns to raise with us, I would encourage you to e-mail us at BlueDog@mail.house.gov.

I do not raise these issues to simply beat up the Republicans. They are doing a pretty good job of that on their own these days. Public opinion polls indicate that. There is an all-time low approval rating with their leadership in this House and the Senate, with the White House and the Supreme Court.

But I raise these issues to set the stage for the Blue Dog 12-point reform plan. We have a 12-point plan for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending.

Number one, require a balanced budget. Forty-nine States require a balanced budget. I know at the Ross home in Prescott, Arkansas, my wife requires us to have a balanced budget. I do not believe it is asking too much of our Nation to have a balanced budget.

Number two, do not let Congress buy on credit. Every time a Member of Congress comes down here and wants to introduce legislation to fund a new program, they should have to show us which program they are going to cut to fund that new program.

Put a lid on spending. This Republican Congress just from 2001 to 2003, their government spending soared by 16 percent. We want to put strict spending caps to slow the growth of runaway government programs.

Number four, require agencies to put their fiscal houses in order. According to the Government Accounting Office, 16 of 23 major Federal agencies cannot issue a simple audit of their books. Worse, the Federal Government cannot account for \$24.5 billion it spent back in 2003. This is the kind of leadership this Republican Congress has given America. Government auditors should be doing a better job of tracking taxpayer dollars. We want to restore accountability to our government.

Number five, make Congress tell taxpayers how much they are spending. Many spending bills slide through Congress on a voice vote with no debate, and many Members vote on bills without knowing their true cost. The Blue Dog Coalition proposes that any bills calling for more than \$50 million in new spending must be put to a roll call vote.

Set aside a rainy day fund. That is common sense. We all know we are

going to be faced with unexpected happenings and disasters.

Do not hide votes to raise the debt limit. We should have a separate stand-alone vote when this Republican Congress proposes raising the debt limit instead of hiding it in another bill.

Justify spending for pet projects.

And ensure that Congress reads the bills it is voting on. Now we cannot do that, but think about this, over the past few years, some of the largest spending bills in American history have been voted on after only a few hours of consideration. For example, the Medicare prescription drug bill, remember that one, now estimated to cost \$720 billion or more over the next 10 years, went to a vote barely a day after the final version of the 500-plus-page bill was made available to Members of Congress.

As members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we propose that Members of Congress should be given a minimum of 3 days to have the final text of legislation made available to them before there is a vote.

Require honest cost estimates for every bill that Congress votes on.

Make sure new bills fit the budget. That is why we have a budget.

Finally, make Congress do a better job of keeping tabs on government programs. Again, getting back to the word "accountability."

So, Mr. Speaker, I am not here tonight to simply lay blame on this Republican leadership for the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history. I am here to offer up a plan, the Blue Dog Coalition's 12-point reform plan, for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending.

OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for the remaining time before midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to take these few short moments and bring a little more positive perspective, a brighter outlook, and hopefully a little more unifying message than we have just heard and, frankly, than we often hear in the United States House Chamber, especially by some of my good friends from the other side of the aisle.

We call this the Official Truth Squad. I thank the leadership and the conference for allowing me to come and share a few words tonight.

The Official Truth Squad grew out of a frustration on the part of the freshmen class of the Republican Conference. We all were elected in 2004, 24 strong, now 26 of us here in the United States House of Representatives. After a relatively few number of months, we grew frustrated with the fact that there was a lot of misinformation and a lot of distortion and a lot of frankly

deception that was going on here. And so what we wanted to do was to put together a group of folks that would come to the House floor and try as best we could to provide some truth, some facts to the situations that we address here in the United States House of Representatives.

We have just gotten back, Mr. Speaker, from a week at home, a district work period, over the Memorial Day week. I heard from constituent after constituent about two big issues. One was illegal immigration, obviously the largest issue we have to deal with as a Nation right now. But the second one in meeting after meeting after meeting with constituent after constituent all across my district on the north side of Atlanta was people asking why on earth is Congress so divided. Why is it so partisan? Why do you have the kind of sniping that goes on? And I am loathe to answer that question because it is so difficult to understand why there are many in this Chamber who are not interested in working positively or productively together. It just boggles my mind.

These are not Democrat problems or Republican problems, Mr. Speaker; these are American problems. And American problems deserve a united Congress working together.

So what you have just heard in the last 15 minutes is an individual who will tell you that, quote, "this is a Republican Congress problem." Well, Mr. Speaker, we do better if we work together. The fact is that it is extremely difficult to get anything moving forward positively in Congress without the support of many different folks. And so we work better when we work together.

What you hear so often is what I call the politics of division. The politics of division is so destructive, they do a disservice to every single one of us in this Nation.

I tried to put some words to the consequences of the politics of division, and I think I have found a quote. I have shared it with you before, Mr. Speaker, and it comes from the Reverend William Boetcker, who was a philosopher and leader around the time of the late 19th century and early 20th century. He described what he said was a social philosophy and he attributed it to Abraham Lincoln. Nobody can actually determine whether President Lincoln actually said these words, but Reverend Boetcker talked about them, and I think they crystallize and capture my concern, my suspicion about what the consequences are of this politics of division that is so destructive.

□ 2350

He said, "You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You can't help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer, you cannot encourage the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred, and you cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that kind of crystallizes, I think, what is a unifying American philosophy. It is a philosophy that would serve us extremely well here in the United States House of Representatives.

How often do you hear people just castigate out individuals who are more wealthy than others, destroying the rich in an effort to build up the poor. It doesn't work that way, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't work that way. Our system never has. Our system never has done that.

And so the Official Truth Squad tries to bring some credibility and truth to these discussions. We have adopted a motto which is a quote from a wonderful United States Senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan from the State of New York. And this quote, I think, makes it so that everybody has to be held accountable. And what Senator Moynihan said is that everyone is entitled to their opinion. And they are, and opinions are here in the countless number. Everyone's entitled to their opinion, but they're not entitled to their own facts. Everyone's entitled to their opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts, which is why it is so, frankly, troubling, Mr. Speaker, that the Blue Dog group gets up here night after night, week after week and talks about how they want to be fiscally responsible.

You know, we used to say that folks who were politicians that said one thing at home and did something different in Washington weren't being responsive to their constituents. Well, the Blue Dogs have perfected the art of saying one thing in Washington and doing another thing in Washington. And we will use some facts, Mr. Speaker. Here are some facts. You want to talk about facts? During the fiscal year 2006 budget, this was the plan of the Blue Dogs and the Democrats. Instead of being responsible about spending, they offered programs that would have spent 21.5 more billion dollars. You didn't hear that from folks on the other side of the aisle. That is the truth, Mr. Speaker. That is the truth.

How many in new taxes? \$54 billion in new taxes. Talk to me now about what the truth is and what is being proposed and what is being said in Washington and what is being voted on in Washington and what is being said back home.

How many mandatory savings? The Republican conference, all on their own, in a very difficult way, because we got no cooperation from folks who will tell you one thing at home, in fact, they will tell you one thing, that same thing in Washington, but they will do exactly the opposite. We gained \$40 billion this savings with the Deficit Reduction Act.

Earlier this year, how much mandatory savings on the part of the other side? Zero. Zero, Mr. Speaker. That is the truth. That is a fact. That is not opinion. That is a fact.

The bills that they brought forward, the Blue Dogs, my good colleague just

before me, talked about wanting a balanced budget. We have given them an opportunity to vote on a balanced budget. In fact, we did so just 3 or 4 weeks ago here on the floor of the House of Representatives. Not a single one of those 37 Blue Dogs voted in favor of that balanced budget. Not one.

They talk about making certain that you pay as you go, that you only pay for programs that you have the money for. We have offered that on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker. We do not get the support of the Blue Dogs.

They talk about having a rainy day fund. Doesn't it make wonderful sense to have a rainy day fund because we know year after year after year we will have emergencies like Katrina or other emergencies. There is an average of \$20 billion annually where there are emergencies that need Federal money during the course of any given year on average. \$20 billion.

So what does the Republican Congress propose that we are being accused of doing? In fact, what we do propose is a rainy day fund in the budget that we just adopted for fiscal year 2007. How many Members of the Blue Dog, how many of those 37 Blue Dogs voted in favor of that rainy day fund? Mr. Speaker, not one. Not one. Same number that we got when we talk about the mandatory savings. Zero. Not one of them support it.

I want to talk about a little positive information about this economy because you won't, you may not hear about it on the nightly news. You may not read about it in your newspapers. You certainly won't hear about it from some folks who want to make certain that they practice this politics of division and this politics of deception.

Did you see the new job figures, Mr. Speaker, last month, the month of May? 75,000 new jobs created. And this economy, over the past 12 months has created 1.9 million new jobs. 1.9 million new jobs. More than 5.3 million new jobs since August of 2003.

The unemployment rate has fallen to 4.6 percent, lower than the average of the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

Mr. Speaker, a picture oftentimes says it so much better than any of us can, so let me see if I can show you the picture of that kind of job growth that we have seen over the past 3 years. Here it is on a graph. Here we are in January 2002 with unemployment up at about 5.7 to 8 percent. Here is the job growth at that time. And then on the bottom, we have the number of months going by. We haven't even gotten to this month. But earlier this year, what has happened to the unemployment rate? It has gone down, Mr. Speaker. What's happened to the job growth? It has gone up significantly. Again, 5.3 million new jobs since August of 2003.

So the curious individual, the individual who wanted to solve problems and work positively and productively on behalf of the American people would say well, what happened when this seemed to change, when unemployment

rates began to go down, when the job growth began to go up? What happened? What occurred there?

Well, lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, you know what happened. We had tax decreases, appropriate tax decreases, responsible tax decreases. By making certain that Americans got to keep more of their own money, and when you allow Americans to keep more of their own money, what happens? They spend it and they save it in wise ways and then the economy flourishes. So because of the tax policies of this Congress, of this Congress, and this administration, we have seen increasing job growth and decreasing unemployment.

What else about the economy is going on? Revised reports show the fastest real gross domestic product growth in over 2½ years in the first quarter. Real GDP growth grew at an annual rate of 5.3 percent in the first quarter. Productivity increased at an annual rate of 3.7 percent in the first quarter. Hourly compensation, real hourly compensation rose at a 3.2 annual percentage rate in the first quarter. Personal income increased at an annual rate of 6.7 percent in April. Since January of 2001, real after tax income has risen by 12.9 percent. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because of tax policies, appropriate responsible tax policies put in place by this Congress, this administration, this leadership. And oftentimes, in spite of what you hear at home, and in spite of what you hear by my friends on the other side of the aisle, oftentimes, more often than not, frankly, without a single individual helping on that side of the aisle.

In fact, they come down and they say these tax decreases, the tax reductions will destroy the economy, will throw people out on the streets. But, Mr. Speaker, you know what happens. What happens is that unemployment goes down, job growth goes up, and in fact, sometimes they will even say that at 1 minute and then they will vote for the same thing that they just said was awful, just said was awful just a moment before that.

Mr. Speaker, truth is so doggone important in the public discourse. Remember, you can have your own opinions, but you are not welcome to your own facts. You have got to talk about facts. And that is why the Official Truth Squad takes the opportunity as often as possible to come down here and talk about facts, talk about facts with the American people because the politics of division again, does a disservice to every single American.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a glorious Nation, a wonderful Nation, a Nation that is still seen by men and women around the world as a beacon of liberty and a repository of hope. I am proud to serve in the United States House of Representatives and to have the opportunity to share a positive, productive perspective and vision with my colleagues, and I hope that we can be joined by more and more colleagues on both sides of the aisle as we work to

solve the incredible challenges that we have before us as a Nation. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BACA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of primary elections.

Ms. HARMAN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of a family illness.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in the district.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. WATERS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. WOOLSEY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mrs. BONO (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for the week of June 6 on account of her son's graduation from high school.

Mr. GIBBONS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of attending his son's high school graduation.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ROSS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. FOXX) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, June 7.

Mr. HUNTER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and June 7, 8, and 9.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and June 7, 8, and 9.

Mr. BLUNT, for 5 minutes, June 13.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today and June 7 and 8.

Mr. GOHMERT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, June 7, 8, and 9.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, June 12 and 13.

Mr. SODREL, for 5 minutes, June 7.

Mr. ISSA, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2784. An act to award a congressional gold medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in recognition of his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, non-violence, human rights, and religious understanding; to the Committee on Financial Services.

S. 3322. An act to build operational readiness in civilian agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1953. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the Old Mint at San Francisco, otherwise known as the "Granite Lady", and for other purposes.

H.R. 3829. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma, as the Jack C. Montgomery Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

H.R. 5401. An act to amend section 308 of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial Commemorative Coin Act to make certain clarifying and technical amendments.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1235. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and extend housing, insurance, outreach, and benefits programs provided under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to improve and extend employment programs for veterans under laws administered by the Secretary of Labor, and for other purposes.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on May 25, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 5037. To amend titles 38 and 18, United States Code, to prohibit certain demonstrations at cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration and at Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), the House adjourned until today, Wednesday, June 7, 2006, at 10 a.m.